

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION
Education Committee Meeting**

**LOCATION
Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference**

**Meeting Date
May 14, 2009**

Attendees:

Kris Johnston, Chair
Anna Attla
Julie Broyles
Taylor Gregg
Ric Nelson
Chris Saddler

Community Members/Guests:

David Kvasager
Janean Butler
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Hettie Hume
Karen Jenkins
Christie Reinhart
Heidi Frost

Staff:

Teresa Holt

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo
Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 2:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL

Changes in Autism Regulations

Teresa Holt asked the committee to go over the autism regulation comments and see if anyone has any additional changes. She stated that Heidi Frost suggested they change the first sentence to say “The Governor’s Council has worked diligently for the last several years to improve both diagnosis and services for children with autism in Alaska and this work includes advocating for funding for the diagnostic clinic at Providence.” Heidi also suggested that they add “Children in rural Alaska are diagnosed three years later than children who live in urban areas.” She then suggested that the last sentence should be changed to read, “Early diagnosis is crucial for children with autism, as early intervention before age five has proven to be the most effective time for treatment.”

Teresa stated that these comments are due today and then the State Board of Ed is meeting on June 11th and 12th and they’ll be voting to accept or not accept these proposed changes which expand it so that an advanced nurse practitioner can sign the piece of paper stating that a child has autism. Teresa clarified that this deals only with the education piece and the special education regs. They would need to look at Medicaid regulations separately.

Christie Reinhart added that this change in the regulations would help in the military clinics as well. She noted that at Elmendorf, they are addressing the need for diagnosis of developmental disabilities and with nurse practitioners being able to sign off on the autism diagnosis, that would at least help with the school piece.

Hetti Hume added that she had three people call her about the proposed changes in Fairbanks. She stated that the people who agree with it are saying that there’s not enough people to diagnose. The people who say there are drawbacks to it felt that the nurse practitioner who will be providing the diagnostic piece won’t have the background that a pediatric doctor would. Teresa Holt clarified and stated that it’s not just a nurse’s aide, it’s an advanced nurse practitioner who, by their licensing regulations, can prove that they know enough about autism to include that in their scope of practice without doing malpractice.

Christie Reinhart added to the third paragraph which says, “This is especially true for children who live in rural Alaska or on military installations.”

Review of Ketchikan Council Meeting

Teresa Holt stated that at the spring Council meeting, they invite all their partner agencies and State agencies to come and talk about their accomplishments for the year and their priorities for the next year, and then the Council pulls any of those priorities that might fit into any of their committees. Then each committee presents their list of priorities and then the full Council votes on the priorities for each of the committees.

Review of Committee Priorities

Teresa Holt stated that the priorities for the Education Committee are as follows:

1. Supporting Senate Bill 109 and removing the exit exam as a requirement for a diploma
2. Ensure SESA has adequate permanent funding
3. Advocate for a 10 percent increase in Alaska-grown special ed teachers and related service providers
4. Prepare recommendations from the survey on 504 issues and present to the State Board of Education.

Teresa stated that the first priority they will be working on is the preparing recommendations from the survey on 504 issues because they have the results of the survey. They got 60% of the school districts to respond.

Teresa stated that those are the top four priorities, though there were some other areas that the group had identified and may have time to work on as secondary priorities, one of those being changing the language in the State special ed regulations from MR to some other terminology. Art Arnold stated that this should be fairly easy to do. Christie Reinhardt stated that the common practice now is to use the term ID or intellectual disability. Teresa Holt will bring it up at the State Board of Education meeting.

Teresa stated that another one of their issues that didn't make it to the top four

was a youth summit to discuss issues related to self-advocacy and transition for students with disabilities. Another was to create and distribute DVDs for parents on information and referral for initial diagnosis. The last one was to advocate for a statewide Train the Trainers Program for person-centered planning and community resource mapping.

Some of the priorities that other agencies brought to their attention include looking at how to set up the NIMAS/NIMAC system in Alaska for people who are print impaired. Restraint and seclusion issues were also talked about as well as Response to Intervention and positive behavioral support. Art also brought handbook revisions that they will also be addressing.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus expressed her disappointment that there is no mention of FASD on the list. She wondered what the potential would be of getting an FASD ad hoc committee started and Teresa Holt stated that that would be a full Council agenda item. She stated that they may be able to make it a subcommittee of the Rural Ad Hoc Committee but she's not sure. The group discussed whether or not the Council should have disability specific committees.

Jeanne stated that one issue around FASD is that it's not recognized as a special education category other than "other health impaired". Teresa Holt stated that on the federal level there were several groups that lobbied very hard to make it a separate category. Teresa stated that it's a very tough issue and added that there's no federal funding for adults with FASD because they don't fit under DD, mental health, or independent living.

Face-to-Face Meeting

Teresa Holt stated that the Education Committee has typically met face to face in Anchorage around a conference, but that they could look at doing a rural outreach trip. Ric Nelson stated that Anchorage might work best for him but also suggested Kenai. Kris Johnston asked if there was another conference that they could piggyback onto. Teresa suggested Talkeetna and Mat-Su.

Teresa suggested doing an e-mail asking people about dates and locations that would work best for them.

Important Future Meetings/Conferences/Trainings

Teresa Holt stated that people need to decide which conferences they want to attend so that they can get in their specific requests and recommendation to the Executive Committee. Kris Johnston stated that they should put in for at least two to attend CEC on the East Coast and at least two for ACRES and she also suggested TASH. There is also OSEP and Accountability.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.